

SERMON

Preached in the Parish Church of
St. Giles in the Fields.

At the FUNERAL of

Edward Connor, M. D.

Who died on his Life, Oct. 30. 1698.

With a Short Account of his Life and Death.

By Thomas Hayley, D. D. Rector of the said
Church, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His
Majesty.

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SERMON

Preached in the Parish Church of
St Giles in the Fields.

At the FUNERAL of

Bernard Connor, M. D.

Who departed this Life, Oct. 10. 1693.

By

John Wall, M. A.

Curate of the said Church.

At the Funeral of the said

Mr. Connor, and of the said

M. A.

Curate of the said Church.

At the Funeral of the said

Mr. Connor, and of the said

M. A.

SERMON

Preached at the Funeral of
Doctor Connor.

PSALM XC. *Teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

There is nothing more apparent to the capacity of all men than the uncertainty of life, and nothing of which mankind is more universally persuaded than the necessity of Death; these are truths so self-evident, that there needs no labour to demonstrate them, the fate of past Generations has given us palpable arguments to imprint them upon our minds, and the present, and every such like occasion of meeting, are so many

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fresh renewals of the impression; so that as to it,
 the most ignorant does not want an instructor to tell
 him that he must Die, and that every day of his
 Life brings him one step nearer to the Grave.
 And yet though men are thus universall wise in
 the Theory, we find them almost as universall
 unwise in the more necessary point that of practice.
 Men know they must Die, they daily *discourse* and
complain of it, nay in their *temporal* concerns their
 covetousness, pride, and ambition, they consider and
 provide for it; and yet they are so blind that they
 seldom apply it to their *great*, their *eternal* concerns,
 or draw from it those plain and easily conclusions,
 which it naturally furnishes to persuade to a cir-
 cumspect and religious manner of living.

Some look upon it as a great *truth* indeed, but
 so plain as not to need the being reflected on; and
 therefore neglect it as hardly worth their notice,
 or at least think the consideration of it may be as-
 sumed at their leisure. Some again know it is a
truth, and they are afraid of it; they see its pointed
 and must prick their consciences; if they suffer
 themselves to dwell upon it, and therefore put
 away the evil day far from them, remove the thoughts
 of it from their mind, as they wish they could do

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the thing from their persons, and try in their hearts
 to find imaginations, as the Demoniacks did to our
 Saviour, *that they should not come to torment them
 before the time.* And others use the important truth
 yet worse if possible, and endeavour to *disparage*
 to pamper the *jolly and lolly*; they conclude since
 life is short, *its best enjoy its delights as fast as they
 can* and live *upon* because they must shortly de-
 part; and so advance for their common Motto,
Let us eat and drink for to morrow we die. Thus
 the great and useful lesson of the brevity of life,
 which Nature teaches, and the word of God in-
 creases, *misled of its true end, which is the reforma-
 tion of our manners,* is overlooked by the negligent,
 abused by the voluptuous, and perverted and
 abused by the daring and prophane.

The Sacred *Author* *their* role of this *Play*, who
 is supposed to have been *most* the favorite of God,
 makes it his petition, that he might be directed by
 the aid of Heaven in the application of this piece
 of knowledge; and since the world was generally
 so unfortunate, as not to make a due use of it,
 that God would graciously please to teach him and
 his people the way to profit by it. He knew ve-
 ry well that our days pass on infernally, and that
no living our years to an end in it were a tale that is

old is that the days of our years are threescore years
and ten; that if they exceed, 'tis but to bring an
accession of labour and sorrow; and that their date
is made much shorter by our own ill conduct, and
the just punishment that it deserves; that the di-
vine anger frequently cuts the thread of a dissolute
life, and the divine providence sometimes straitens
the bounds of a pious one, and therefore that all are
concerned to reflect seriously on their frail and un-
certain state, and to make that consideration a
motive to a wise and a watchful conduct; and since
all wisdom comes from above, and 'tis God himself
that must direct our going in, or else our
foot-steps will slip, he makes this his supplication, and
thereby directs us to do the same, that God the
Author of all that is good in us, or useful for us,
would so teach us as to number our days, that we may
apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Wisdom is in the sense of my text, the prudent
administration of our life, the disposal of our ways
agreeably to reason and religion, the careful preser-
vation of our innocence in this world, and the se-
curing our happiness in a future one; these being
the great ends of Man, and consequently the ob-
taining of them being the main of our hope, and
the due prosecution of them the most exalted wis-
dom.

down And the applying our hearts to this wisdom,
 is the making it the *intimate desire* of all our thoughts
 and actions, the fixing our minds upon it, the en-
 tertaining it with such serious meditation as the dig-
 nity of the subject requires, the keeping it still in
 our view, and not letting it either escape by *inad-*
vertency, or grow remiss by its becoming *familiar*,
 but the persisting in a constant, uniform con-
 veyance and endeavour, to order the little time we
 have so wisely, as to secure our *eternity* by it, and
 so *work out our own salvation with fear and trembling*.
 This is to be the great important result of the *amen-*
ding our days, or the reflecting seriously on the *short-*
ness and uncertainty of human life; this is the ex-
 cellent lesson that we are to learn by the present,
 and by all other like occasions of assembling, which
 were piously designed, not for vain useless *osten-*
tation, but for our *real instruction and improvement*;
 and were not so much intended for ceremony to
 the dead, as for advantage to the *living*; this be-
 ing an opportunity when our hearts are supposed
 to be more *mollified*, and more capable of serious
 impressions, when our tears should soften and pre-
 pare the soul for the reception of God's word, and
 further in *fruitfulness*, when our senses being filled
 with the demonstration of the *vanity* of this world,
 we should sensibly relish the joys of another. And

O that it would please God so to bless what
 are now about to deliver, that it might effectually
 engage us all, not to a faint reflection on morali-
 ty, which passes away with the pomp of the fu-
 neral, but to such an habitual remembrance of it
 as might work its natural effect, the applying of
 our hearts to true wisdom; to unfeigned holiness
 and the fear of God. This would be an effect
 truly answering the charity of our deceased Brother
 who being now (as we hope in God) united to the
 society of the Saints in glory, would with them
 more rejoice at the conversion of a sinner than at
 perverting one himself; and be more pleased at
 the improvement of others' security than at the ven-
 cing of his own. And as we are not without excel-
 lent reason in this, I shall in my discourse
 upon these words observe the following method.
 I shall show that the understanding our duty fur-
 nishes us with excellent motives to a pious and ho-
 ly life. I shall then observe the advantage to the church
 of the applying of these words to the heart, as
 the highest piece of wisdom, and as the most
 valuable. I shall enquire how it comes to pass that
 they have generally so little influence on the minds
 of men, and at last to engage them seriously to a con-
 stant and habitual piety.

14. I shall conclude with an earnest exhortation,
 to make that due application of our hearts to win-
 dom which the text directs us to pray for, and the
 present occasion does so movingly recommend to us.
 1. That the numbring our days furnishes us with
 excellent motives to a pious and holy life. The
 numbring our days is the serious consideration of
 the brevity and uncertainty of life, and the fatal
 consequence of a dissolution; that we must die, that
 it will not be long before we do, that the time is
 not at our own disposal, no nor in our knowledge,
 that the method of our ending our days is as un-
 certain as the time, but that whenever or however
 it happens, it opens a passage into an eternity of
 joy or misery. Such reflections as these make up
 the work of numbring our days, and at first ap-
 prehension they must strike the mind with astoni-
 shment and concern; but they are too many to be con-
 sidered all together, and too fruitful of arguments
 to have them all at one glance deduced and attend-
 ed to. I shall therefore distinctly treat of some at
 least of the *principals* of them, and shew the motives
 they afford to piety and a holy life.
 1. The numbring our days implies that we must
 die, and that a period must be put to them, what-
 ever can be numbered must end, is only *infini-ty*
 that

that is always durable. The life of man is indeed properly *eternal*, and his mortal life is but the *prologue* of it, we were made principally for another world, and this present one is but the journey that leads to it. Let it be therefore never so durable we must at last come to our *long home*, and its length will then be nothing, when eternity is put in the balance with it, how pleasant soever the objects of our senses may be, however our affections may dart upon them, and make us say within our selves, as Peter did to our Saviour on the mount, *It is good for us to be here.* Yet the eternal Laws of mortality oppose their bent, and cry aloud to us that *we have here no abiding city.* Our bodies are tabernacles that cannot last long, and nature it self by degrees moulders these our houses of clay, to make way for *death*, and that lands us upon *immortality*.

The consideration of this is sufficient to teach us that the business of *this world* is not to be our greatest care: that what is needful for our temporary support is not of so great importance, as what makes a provision for an *endless life*; what if every thing here does not fall according to our wishes? or what if it does? what if the world frown upon us, and we meet with *disappointment* in our designs, *necessity* in our fortune and pains and *diseases* in our bodies? what

what if all these join together to make our journey uneasy? if we are sure in the end to find a lasting comfort, to have all our tears wiped off, and an admittance given us into the joy of our Lord? and what if Fortune smile upon us here for a moment? what if we are feared or envy'd, caressed or loved by those about us? what if we have health of body, plentiful estates and fair reputations? if in the mean time our hopes reach no farther, and death is to put an end both to our *grandeur* and our *expectation*? would not any man that reflects seriously on this be apt to say to himself, shall I spend my thoughts or contrivance for that which profiteth nothing? or for so short a time? shall I loose my *rest* and my *peace*, to be rich or great in the sight of my *neighbours*, when I am poor and miserable in the sight of my *God*, destitute of the riches of his *grace*, and the *Spiritual* treasure of good works? shall I gratify my own follies and vices, and in the hurry of them fancy I live for a moment, and so be carried away blindly into everlasting Death? O *stupidity* and *madness*! that can please itself with the gaiety of a mortal state, and in the mean time not make provision for immortality! 'tis enough that this world passeth away, to make us not value it; and that our home is in another, to perswade us to think of, and provide for it.

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2. Ano-

Another reflexion that the numbering of our days will afford us, is, that life is at best but *short*, and of no considerable duration; if we reckon it from our birth to the period of a good old age, 'tis no vast circuit; when *Jacob* had lived near twice the common age of man, and the days of his pilgrimage were 130 years, he told *Pharaoh* that *the days of the years of his life were but few as well as evil*. 'Tis the usual complaint of those that spend their time in enquiries after Sciences, in the search of Nature, or the improvement of Arts, that *knowledge* is of a vast extent, and *life* is but short to work it out; but if we measure the greatness of the work that most concerns us, the subduing our corruptions, the improving our graces, and the study and practice of our Duty, this short time will appear yet more inconsiderable, the *days* fly swiftly, and the *night* hastily approaches *wherein no man can work*. I do not now mention, that a great part of this life is spent before we come to any maturity of thought, that another great portion is given to necessary *employments* and *diversions*, and a third glides away insensibly in the silence of thoughtless Sleep; for the present let us suppose that all of it were in our hands to husband and employ to our spiritual advantage, and that we were sure it should not be suddenly snatcht from us, yet alas! it is easily mea-
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sured, we see how short it seems to our selves, when we look back upon what is past of it, and if we do but compare it with *eternity*, it quite disappears and vanishes into *nothing*.

Let us see then what use *wisdom* would make of such a *consideration* as this; would it pass this little time it has given it to *no* purpose? or to *wicked* ones? would it study methods and contrivances to *waste* and *wispend* it? would it *neglect* its work or *add* to it? would it carelessly let slip the opportunities of repentance and amendment, or render them yet more difficult by affected and habitual impieties? these methods are directly opposite to a perswasion of the brevity of life; such a thought would be productive of *diligence* and *watchfulness*, and would make us vigilant in catching at and improving every opportunity that Providence is pleased to afford us of *making our calling and election sure*; we should account it unexcusable folly to waste our pretious time in the serving of our *lusts*, in the jollities of *extravagance*, or the Supiniry of *sloth* and *idleness*; we should then conclude that we ought at least to *employ* our time well, if we could not *prolong* it, that we should make some progress in our spiritual race, press on daily nearer and nearer to perfection, and be therefore more active, because we find we have not long to run; but above all we

should dread the going *backward* in our course by vice and licentiousness, and the *fettering* our selves in the sinful pleasures of the world, and *loading* our minds with the clogs of wicked affections and vicious desires. Whoever is truly sensible that his hours are *few*, will not dare to be *prodigal* of them, and he that wisely considers that his work is great, and that it must be done, will tremble at the thoughts of idly neglecting it, remissly engaging in it, or foolishly swelling its bulk or obstructing its progress.

3. The numbring our days will convince us, that this short life is yet shorter to us; that its period is *uncertain* and *unknown*; and what must necessarily end quickly by the common laws of nature, is frequently by our own follies, by chance and accident, and by an over-ruling providence suddenly broke off and concluded, or which is equal to us, render'd useless to our *main* design, the preparing for *another* life. We may perhaps arrive to the age of man which the Psalmist assigns, that of three-score years and ten; we may possibly, by a *gentle* hand of God be called from the hurry of business, the vanities of the world, and the temptations of pleasures, and have *leisure*, upon a bed of retirement, without acute or discomposing sickness, to think and prepare for *Heaven*, and make our peace with

with God; these advantages 'tis possible the divine clemency may afford *some* of us; but we are to reflect that these are *extraordinary* advantages, that God does not generally vouchsafe to men, but is pleased to indulge only to some few as particular expressions of his Paternal love. The *present* occasion of our meeting must divert us from such expectations, and if we turn our thoughts upon the *usual* methods of mens departure, we see that the most are taken off; when they least think of it; some *suddenly* without time to reflect, some by *acute* diseases that *disturb* the mind, and take away either its *sense*, or the *calm* which is necessary for divine thoughts; and in some the vigor of the understanding wears away with the strength of the body, and *dodge* takes up that time which they had destin'd for the work of their Conversion; thus we see we are not rationally to expect that our years should grow to their *possible* extent, or that they should be *useful* to us if they did; and therefore we should constantly be apprehensive of what may always happen, and be still prepared for what may every day arrive.

This reflection then must necessarily awaken us from the lethargy of *security*; and shew us the fatal imprudence of putting the evil day *far from us*.

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Have I not begun my preparation for death till this day, and yet for ought I know this may be the very last day of my life? I may perhaps *this hour* be called to give up my accounts, and wretched man than I am! I have scarce yet had it in my thoughts, that I have an account to make! must not such a consideration as this terrify the sinner, discover the egregious folly of a *wicked* life, the necessity of *repentance*, and that a *speedy* one? is it possible that a man could take any pleasure in the most delightful of all his sensual enjoyments, if he reflected that in that very moment he were to expect death as the reward of it? this he knows he *deserves*, and he does not know but he may *feel*; and therefore he can never be easy or satisfied, while he remembers it, till he has made his peace with that God, in whose hands are his life and death. Nothing sure can be a more rational inducement to draw off our dependance on the world, than to think we do not know how soon we may quit it, nor is there a more natural consequence of the *uncertainty* of death, than the absolute necessity of a *present* and certain preparation.

4. The last suggestion I shall offer from the number of our days, which carries with it one of the strongest motives to a *true use* of life; is, that the same

same moment that terminates our days, puts an end likewise to all opportunities of *conversion* or *reconciliation* to God. *As the tree falls so it lies, and as the grave receives us, so will it deliver us to judgment.* Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation, but in death no man can remember God or make his peace with him in the pit. Were there a middle state, where we might have a double prospect, backward on the vanities and follies of the world, and forward on the two portions of endless bliss or torment, and might we be there admitted to sue out our pardon, and to make atonement for the errors of our life, it would possibly not be reckon'd folly, to defer our preparations for another world, till we had done with this; but Sacred writ assures us, that there is no such middle state or opportunity of reconciliation, but that as certainly as 'tis appointed for all men once to die, so certainly after death succeedeth the judgment: and we shall not be judged according to any future thoughts we may have hereafter, but every man shall receive according to what he has done in the flesh whether it be good or evil.

Is there then no thought, or labour in, or beyond the grave? is there nothing that can avail us towards joy in the world to come, but our passing of
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our days on earth in a conscientious discharge of our duty? and can we live here, as if we had nothing to do, or nothing but what we might defer till a future state? is this life our only stage of probation and tryal, and must the other receive us as we are qualified when we go out of it; and can we think we are not concerned how we behave our selves *here*, or deliver our selves up to our Judge? if when we depart hence spotted and polluted with unrepented sins, there is no fountain left to purge our pollutions, but a devouring fire only to punish them, sure we cannot be so stupid as not to wash away speedily our habitual vices, in repentant tears and a bitter humiliation, and labour mightily *in this our day, for the things that belong to our peace, before they are hid from our eyes.* And if those only are admitted into the company of the lamb, who are sanctified by his blood, and cloathed with innocence, will not common sense tell us, that we ought to lay hold on the merits of his blood and passion, by a zealous performance of the duties of that covenant which was sealed by it, and by a careful preservation of our integrity, and an affectionate doing of his Will while we are in the flesh, make our selves meet to be received into his glory, *cleanse our selves from all filthineß both of flesh and Spirit, and perfect*
holi-

beliest in the fear of God? that when we come to die, we may do so with joy, and embrace our dissolution, as that which will crown the *present* life on earth, with an *immortal* one in Heaven.

These are the genuine *applications* of some of the most considerable *reflections*, that arise from the *mourning our days*, whereby it appears, that this lesson furnishes us with excellent motives to a holy life, I come now to shew

II. That the applying of them to this end is the highest piece of *wisdom*. And that, whether wisdom be taken for *judging* aright, or for the doing what is most for our *interest* and *advantage*. If wisdom be taken for *judging* aright, or deducing just consequences from evident truths, what can be more evident than the wisdom of these conclusions? if we must *quit* this world, and then enter upon an *eternity* of joy or misery, is it not rational to take care how we *steer* our present course, that we do not make a fatal mistake at last? if the time we have to stay be but *short*, is it not just and fit that we be cautious of *loosing* and misapplying it? if its duration be *uncertain*, and futurity be out of our knowledge, does it not highly become an understanding creature, to be *prepared* for what may happen? and if this opportunity being once

lost; where be we who to retire out lives, & does
 not common reason urge us immediately to embrace
 and employ it? and do we not all assist in these
 affairs that relate to our temporal concerns? and
 how then should it not be natural to judge alike
 with reference to our spiritual? the contrary judg-
 ments which *Libertinism* makes, how unconvulsive
 and absurd are they? life must end, therefore tis
 no matter how we spend it; tis gone, therefore tis
 not worth our improving? tis uncertain, and there-
 fore tis in vain to design any thing in it; and tis
 our only opportunity, and therefore what? that
 we must neglect, pervert and abuse it? O senseless
 folly, and unmanly stupidity! we pretend in vain
 to reason, if we can judge no better, we have no
 pretence to understanding, no not so much as to that
 of the *beasts* that perish; *we sum up in Saniolus*
 - 120 But then if we take wisdom for the doing of
 that which is most for our interest and advantage, one
 should think there were no need of proof to evince,
 that to spend our life in goodness and piety, is the
 most useful deduction we can make from the vanity
 and brevity of it; for what do we lose by it? or
 what do we gain by the contrary? if there be cer-
 tainly a future judgment, an eternity of bliss, and
 a like of everlasting fire, we are then sure of nothing
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but *joy* can bear the *eye*, can be admitted into the *stir*, or delivered from the *last*. And I would ask a *prophane* and *impenitent* person, how he thinks he can bear the *pain* of the *last* *millennium*? what thoughts would be railed in him from the sight of a *distasteful* *Heaven*, and what sense he would have of the torments of a *present* *Hell*? if these things must be, sure *reason* as well as *religion* must make the *Apostles* reflection, what manner of persons ought we to be in all *holy* conversation and *godliness*?

But what if these things were only *probabilities* and *speculations*? what if we were not fully assured that there were to be a future state, but only *apprehended* and *dreaded* it? a pious life would still be the most *advantageous* conclusion we could deduce from this; for what do we lose by it? nothing but some of the *deceitful* pleasures of *sense*, which always fall short of our hopes, end in *dissatisfaction*, and never fully gratify: and yet we gain in exchange the delights of *virtue*, which are *deep, real and lasting*. And what great pleasure is it that we have from *vice*? is it enough to make amends for the fears and dread we have, least the checks of our *conscience*, and the voice of *reason* and *religion* should prove *true* at last? does it ballance the dismal apprehensions we have upon a *sick-bed*, or upon approaching *death*? No, I am fully persuaded, that as there is

no one so wicked but he would *die the death of the righteous*, and wishes it whilst he lives; so there is not any so profligate, but when he sees his *last hour* is coming, he would most willingly choose to have had all his years confined to a bed of weakness, and debar'd all the sensual delights of the world, so that he might *die like the good man*, and have that peace of conscience, and comfortable assurance of happiness, which the *pious Christian* has when he departs this life.

I shall therefore make no question but that every one that hears me is fully convinced, of the wisdom of applying the thoughts of *death* to the reformation of life; and so may be all mankind are, when they do but *reflect*; and yet we see these reflections are like man himself, *short-lived, uncertain, and too often fruitless*; and therefore that they may not be so with us, let us if we can, find out the *causes* of this unhappiness in order to avoid them, and this I am to endeavour in my *third General*.

III. Where I am to enquire, how it comes to pass that these things have generally so little influence on the minds of men, as not to engage them seriously to constant and habitual *piety*. Now to omit others, I conceive it generally owing to one of these *two reasons*.

1. Men

Men do not generally *consider* seriously, or *reflect* on these truths, with that attention and meditation as is proper for a matter of so great importance; the world is most commonly taken up with *interest* and *pleasure*; and mens thoughts are habitually possess'd with contrivances of another nature; and when a person is so overbusy in raising his *fortune*, gratifying his *appetite*, or combating with *necessity*, matters of *religion*, and particularly preparation for *death*, may wait long before they are admitted; and when they are, they have but a short hearing, and are presently dismiss'd with a *be gone for this time and when I have a convenient opportunity I will resume ye*. Now *inconsideration* is a certain obstruction to the most excellent rules or motives that can be given a man; the Doctrine I now press is a *sovereign medicine* indeed, but it must be *applied* and *digested*; if the patient will not *receive* and *keep* it, 'tis in vain to expect any *benefit* from it. 'Tis as plain an argument as *sense* and *reason* can invent against the worship of an *image*; that it is a thing *insensible* and *incapable* of adoration; and yet not only the *Gentile* world, but the *Israelites* themselves, and, I wish I could not add, some *Christians*, have been drawn in to the folly, and the Prophet *Isaiah* in his 44th Chap. and 19th Verse gives the reason for it. And that

is, that none considereth in his heart, I have burnt part of it in the fire, and shall I make the residue of it an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? And thus the certainty of death, and the brevity and vanity of life are as strong motions to virtue and piety, as can possibly be given to men, but yet they can never have a due effect, if Israel will not know, if the people will not consider. And therefore it is that the mercy of God breaks out into that patheticall wish in the 32. Psalm. *O that they were wise that they understood this that they would consider their latter end.*

If there are many that will not consider at all, there are many likewise that baffle their consideration, with the hopes of such advantages as possibly may happen. They know and consider too that they must die, and that their life is short and uncertain, and they are not ignorant that they must make their peace with God before they depart this life, or perish everlastingly; but yet it is possible they may live to a good old age, and wear out by degrees; may have leisure to think, and be good when they are no longer able to enjoy the pleasures of life, and when they resolve to lay aside all other business, and think of nothing. They see there are some that God blesses with a gradual and a sensible de-

departure, and therefore they hope for the same mercy which God vouchsafes to these *some*, and do therefore *abuse* his patience and long sufferance, because they *hope* for it. I do not now urge the *unreasonableness* and *ingratitude* of such a carriage, nor contend that the goodness of God should rather lead us to a speedy reformation; I am only now noting that how unreasonable soever it be, yet still this is a great cause of the *backwardness* and *procrastination* of repentance: *Hope* is a flattering passion, it will represent what is *possible* as if it were *certain*, and what is *sometimes* given, as if it might be *always* expected; and so by pursuing these *vain* hopes men loose their *real* ones, and are overtaken by evil when they promised themselves *peace*. They hope death will not come quickly, and so squander away life, and by expecting a longer duration of their being in this world, are not hasty in laying the well grounded expectation of bliss in a future one.

Now if there be any here present who have hitherto *deferred* their preparation for another world, who are in the strength of their youth, and resolve still to *put off* this work till old age, I need not send them *far* for arguments to convince them of their folly. Our deceased Brother God has called away
in

in the vigor of his *youth*, about the *thirty third* year of his age, when the world was in expectation of great things from him, and when possibly improvement in *natural knowledge*, reputation in his *profession*, and advancement in his *fortune* filled and employed his thoughts. He had liv'd a *virtuous* and a *sober* life, free from those extravagancies which men in the luxuriant bloom of *youth* and *wis* are too often carried into, and by which they run into a *hasty* decay; and yet God has been pleased to call him away in the *midst* of his course, and to make him our *warning* of the uncertainty of life.

Thus his *fate* is one argument for us, and if we regard his *judgment* in this matter, that will be another; for though he had been free from the *debauches* of the age, yet what he seem'd most to lament at his death was that he had not been better *prepared* for it, and that he had not employ'd more of that time which he spent in the search of *nature* and the entertainment of *Philosophy*, in the more *useful* search into the state of his *Soul* and the concerns of a *future* life; so that both the *persuasion* of his mind and his *early departure* strike in with my main design, to press men to apply their hearts betimes to this piece of true *wisdom*, the *early preparing* for *eternity*. But before I come to the close *application* of this, it will per-

perhaps not be unacceptable to you to have some short account of *his* life and death who gives the occasion of this present Admonition.

He was born in *Ireland*, and educated in the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, and remained in his own Country, as I am informed by his Friends, till about the *twentieth* year of his age; when in order to cultivate his *Studies*, and to apply his mind to *Physick*, and work out his *fortune*, he betook himself to *travel*. His parts and conduct were soon taken notice of in the Court of *France*, where the Care and Government of the Sons of the high *Chancellor of Poland* who were then in that Kingdom, was committed to him, and he attended them in their travels into *Italy*, *Sicily*, *Germany*, &c. which gave him opportunity of making many considerable *Observations* in those Countries. At his arrival in *Poland*, whither he accompanied these Gentlemen in their return, he was made *Physitian* to the late *King*, and by him recommended to his Daughter the *Electress of Bavaria*, to have the care of her health. After some stay at the *Election's Court*, he departed thence with several marks of *esteem* and *favour*, as he had before done from the Court of *Poland*, and he came through *Holland* into this *City*, where he was admitted into the *Royal Society* and the *Colledge of Physicians*.

Whether it were only to perfect himself in *Physick* that he came into *England*, where our *Professors* have deservedly the reputation of excelling those of our neighbouring Nations, or whether his riper years gave him other *Opinions* in matters of *Religion* than would have been tolerated in the Courts whence he came, I had not opportunity of informing my self. In fact, he had not been long in *England* but he became so far acquainted with our *Doctrine* and *Discipline*, and approved of both so well, that he professed himself a Member of our *Church*, what were the main arguments and inducements to his *conversion*, though I could wish they were publick, I could not particularly examine; for I knew not of his sickness till two days before his death, when he was very weak; and I was then ignorant of his having been bred up in the *Roman Communion*, and had I known it, I should still have thought it more necessary to employ that little time his *weakness* would enable him to hold a discourse, in examining his present *sincerity*, and directing him in his *last work*, than in enquiring into the *occasions* and *reasons* that brought him to a change of his *Religion*.

He had in his sickness, before his distemper arrived to a great height, and while he was in his perfect senses, made his *Will*, in which he left five pounds

pounds to the poor of this Parish where he now lived, and desired that if it should please God to take him out of this world, I might preach him a *Funeral Sermon*, and that it might be made *publick*; his friends let me know this, and at *his* and *their* request I visited him; I found him very much decayed in his strength, but perfectly sensible, as he had still been, in the *intervals* of his fits, though the *height* of his Fever put him into *ravings*. As soon as I saw him he requested of me what his friends had told me beforehand, and I presumed his design in it was that he might be vindicated from the suspicion of some *Heterodox opinions* which his *censurers* imputed to him, as well as that his *death* might be the occasion of an useful discourse to the *living*. I therefore told him that in case I complied with his desire, I thought it would be expected I should say something of a *person* whose *writings* and *character* had rendered him so much known to the world, and had given occasion to some people to speak *doubtfully* of his *principles in Religion*, and that for this reason, among others, it would be very proper for me to have some *satisfaction* from him, as to his *Faith*; upon which I put several questions to him, as *whether he believed the Gospel? whether he gave credit to the Miracles that are there recorded; and look upon them as attestations of the truth*

of the Christian Religion? whether he believed that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world, and that he came to be our Propitiation, and to satisfy divine justice for the sins of mankind? to which, and such-like questions he answer'd affirmatively with great earnestness; and when I discours'd him on the subject of that Book of his, which occasion'd suspicion of his Principles, he declared that he had no intention to prejudice Religion thereby, and remitted me to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury for farther satisfaction, to whom he said he had explain'd himself in this matter, and as an attestation of his sincerity had received the Sacrament upon it, at the Parish Church of St. Martin's in the Fields, which I have since found to be true.

I then began to examine him as to the state of his Soul, what sense he had of his sins? and what remorse for having at any time offended God? and whether he were perswaded of the necessity of repentance and amendment of life in order to gain the Salvation purchased by Jesus Christ? to all which he gave me very satisfactory answers, and expressed great sorrow for the sins and errors of his life past, and then join'd with us very devoutly in the Prayers of the Church, in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick.

In the afternoon of the same day I went with a de-

desire to have had some farther discourse with him, but the violence of his fit being upon him, he was not in a condition to be spoken with.

The next morning I visited him again, and found him in one of his *intervals*, still *sensible* but very much *weakned*. I took this occasion to talk with him more particularly concerning his principles, and upon mentioning the *merits* of our Saviour, askt him whether he depended entirely on the *merits* of Jesus Christ, and his *intercession* for pardon of his sins and réconcilement to God? and he made answer that he *relied only on the merits of his Saviour*. He was then put in mind of receiving the *Sacrament*, and he said he *desir'd it with all his Soul*, I asked him whether in receiving the *Sacrament* he had in his view the professing himself a disciple of *Christ* and a Member of *his Body the Church*? and if in receiving it from *my hands* he desired to profess himself a Member of the *Church of England*, which question being a *second time* distinctly put to him by a friend of his then present, he answered with very great *seriousness* that he did; then I put him in mind of his *neglect* of receiving the *Sacrament*, which he had not done since about *two years* ago when he communicated at *St. Martins*, and he express'd a *sorrow* for it; by all this I thought he sufficiently purged himself from the imputation of *Deism*, *Socinianism*

nianism or Rapery, I lookt on him as a *true penitent* Member of the *Church of England*, and I gave him the Sacrament. He received it with signs of very great *devotion*, with expressions of hearty *repentance* for all the sins and follies of his life; and earnest *petitions* for pardon, and so I left him, as far as we could judge, in a *Christian* disposition for death, which I look'd upon as very *near*.

These are things which I think my self *obliged* to give a *particular* account of, partly to answer what I conceive was the *design* of the deceased, and partly upon occasion of an *accident* that happen'd some hours after I left him; which perhaps it will be thought not *fair* to conceal; A certain person, who it seems was a *Romish Priest*, came to the *Doctor's* Lodgings, and desired very earnestly to see him, declaring that he was his *Country-man*, his *Friend* and his *Relation*, those about him, looking upon him as very near his departure, were unwilling he should be disturbed; but upon great *importunity* did at last grant the *stranger* admittance, who coming to the Bed side, call'd the Doctor by his name and saluted him in his *native* Language *three* times before he regarded; but at the third time he cry'd out for *God's sake* assist me. Upon which the company was prevailed with to leave the Room, but the Doctor's most intimate *friend* returned to the door

door and heard the Doctor repeating over his *Confessor* in *Latin*, in a very *buddled* manner; upon which the *Priest* gave him *Absolution*, and then asked him whether he would have *extream Unction*, and the Doctor said yes, after which it is suspected it was given him.

Now here could I imagine the Doctor was in his *senses*, and that he was really in his heart of the *Roman* Communion, while he only acted this part in the *last scene* of his life, I should look upon it as a very great *stain* on his memory; and I am persuaded it would give every body a *shocking* Idea of that *Religion* which would allow a person to *prevaricate* both with God and Man.

But I confess I believe his *judgment* was now quite *decayed*, and that he did not know what he did; for he was thought dying by those about him, though he recover'd out of that *Agony* and liv'd till next day. His *friend* assures me that in his sickness he turned away another *Romish* Priest, who would have seen him, that the Doctor *thanked* him for it, and desir'd that none of those persons (adding a *reproachful* word which I do not think decent to publish) should be admitted to him, and that it was the Doctor's own desire that I should attend him in his sickness; and I cannot see what *occasion* there should be for such a piece of *dissemina-*

tion if he had been of the *Roman* Communion. Now if the case were *this*, that he was really past his senses, it cannot but give us some *resentment* of the confidence of persons, who will take such *liberties* in our Land as to obtrude themselves upon the dying Members of *our Church*, when they know what severities any *Protestant* must expect, who should dare to do any thing like it in a *Popish Country*. And it must give us some *indignation* against the vanity of that *Church*, which hopes to save a man by words laid over him in which he bears no part; and against the *prophaneness* of those *Priests* who prostitute the most Sacred parts of their Religion, to those who have no faith in them or regard for them. However it be, I thought it a sincere part to lay the thing open as it happen'd, that it might not be pretended that any thing was concealed which should argue him of the *Roman* Communion, or that we do, what we justly reproach our *adversaries* for, endeavour to gain credit to our Church by *feigned* and *pretended* conversions.

IV. It is time now to hasten to the *last* thing I propos'd, to conclude with an earnest *exhortation* to all that hear me, to make that due application of their hearts to wisdom which the *Text* directs us to pray for, and the *present occasion* does so movingly recommend to us.

Does

Does the numbering of our days then afford us the most moving and prevalent arguments to a pious course of living, and does the shortness and uncertainty of life and other reflections drawn from it, naturally excite us to caution and vigilance; let us then for our own interest, and for the glory of God, be persuaded to fix it in our minds, and meditate upon it. Nature has written it in legible characters, and providence gives us frequent demonstrations of it, in the Funerals of our friends and acquaintance; and this day affords us a fresh instance to awaken our memories. Let not this occasion then be unprofitable and vain, let it not add to our condemnation, by proving a new slighted call to conversion; but let the natural death of our Brother be the commencement of our spiritual life; and if we have not yet considered of our great change, let us now begin; and let not business, pleasure or time obliterate the thought, or stop its growth; but let us constantly recall it upon all occasions, in temptation it will help us to fly and resist, in business it will prevent immoderate care and anxiety, and in pleasures it will make us cautious to guide them by innocence, and confine them with moderation. Thus will it be of use in all the scenes of our life, and keep the judgment steady, and the passions in sobriety.

But above all, let us take care that our medita-
tions

ination, but that they have their due energy upon
our *iniquities*; let not *actual amendment* of our lives
be put off till another day, nor let vain hopes of
future opportunities which may be will never come,
make us loose the present which God has put into
our hands. If we *know* we must die, let us live as
men that *know* it; if our time at best cannot be
very long, let us not give *idleness* or *sin* any share
in it, and if our end, for ought we know, may be
now at hand, and no one can tell, but his turn
may be the next, let us endeavour to leave behind
us a pattern for *imitation* and *joy*, and not for *horrour*
and *abhorrence*. And in the last place, since we
have no other time allotted us but this mortal life,
to provide for eternity and to secure our happiness,
let all our actions speak that we think of it, and
are preparing for it. So shall our life have been a
blessing to our selves, a joy to our friends and a ser-
vice to the publick, and our death when ever it
comes, shall be *unavoidable* and *welcome*, not accom-
panied with anxious distrust, and doubtful expectations,
but *cheerful* and *resigned*, and such as gives a blessed
preface of a happy immortality.

Which God of his mercy to his chosen people
grant unto us all. Amen.

FINIS